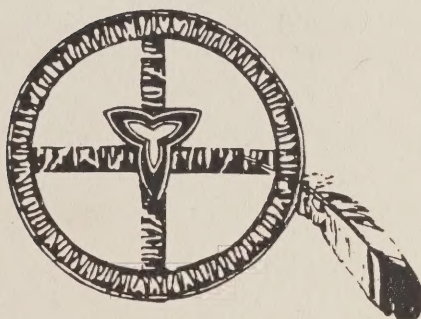


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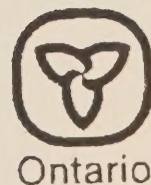
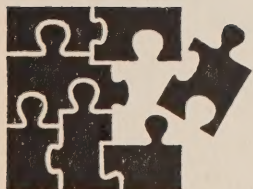
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# Honouring the Difference:

## A Challenge Paper



Report of the Ontario Native  
Employment Equity Circle





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*by*  
**John Stanley**

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# Foreword

This report is based on the discussions, presentations and summaries from the Native Employment Equity Conference, (held at Geneva Park, February 9-12, 1992). Given the Ontario Government's commitment to providing employment equity for Native Peoples, this report attempts to provide a better understanding of the employment barriers that Native Peoples often experience and to offer a variety of proposals for eliminating these barriers. These proposals reflect the collaborative and consensus-seeking philosophy of the Ontario Native Employment Equity Circle and Management Board Secretariat.

The Native Employment Equity Conference, "**Honouring the Difference**", brought Native and Non-Native persons, working in the Ontario Public Service, together for a common goal. The goal was to explore and develop ways and means of improving employment equity for Native Peoples in the Ontario Public Service in such a way that the Native cultures and the OPS organizational cultures could work together in harmony.

The title, "**Honouring the Difference**" was adopted to capture the concept of working together in harmony and to reflect the following underlying challenges of implementing Native employment equity in the OPS.

- 1) It is a challenge for ministries to meet employment equity requirements of the Management Board Secretariat given the current fiscal framework;
- 2) It is a challenge to solve the under representation and under utilization of Native Peoples in the OPS when many Native Peoples are ambivalent about the OPS as a place of employment;



- 3) It is a challenge for the dominant culture of the OPS to better understand the cultures of Native Peoples;
- 4) It is a challenge for Native Peoples to better understand the OPS cultures.

The ultimate challenge is to have the Ontario Public Service make a commitment to Native Employment Equity in a way that will make a difference.

### **Representation of Native Peoples in the OPS**

#### ***Overall***

As of May 1992, Native Peoples represented 1.7% of the OPS workforce (1,099 employees).

Native Peoples are under-represented in the OPS in all areas of the province except Metro Toronto and Central Ontario. The most notable disparity can be found in North-western Ontario, where Native Peoples represent 8.6% of the working-age population but only 4.7% of the regional OPS workforce.

#### **Classified Versus Unclassified Positions**

Native Peoples experience many barriers in employment, and one that is very evident in the OPS is the lack of job security. Of the 1,099 Native OPS employees, 102 (9.3%) are employed in the unclassified service (i.e. not permanent staff).

#### **Proportion of OPS Employees in Unclassified Positions**

Native men	8.4%
Native women	10.2%
Non-designated group	3.8%
All employees	6.9%

Native Peoples were hired into the OPS at a rate higher (1.9% of all new hires, or 348 people) than that of their representation in the province's working-age population (1.7%) during the period June 1989 to May 1992. However, their high rate of departure (173 exits) resulted in only



slight net gains in overall representation in the OPS during this period - an increase to 1.7% from 1.5% in June 1989.

### Occupational Distribution

Native men and women earn less, on average, than all other designated groups. Native men averaged 85.8% of the earnings of the non-designated group, and Native women earned 75.0%. The significant wage gap indicates an over-representation in lower paying occupations of the OPS. For example, 22.4% of all Native men work in the Maintenance Services occupational category, which includes Trades and Crafts, Vehicle Operations and Radio Operations. However, only 7.0% of the OPS workforce are employed in this category.

Similarly, 44.3% of all Native women work in the Office Administration occupational group, compared to 22% of all OPS employees.

### Proportion of the Average Salary of the Non-Designated Group Earned by Native Peoples (May 1992)

Native men	85.8%
All designated group men	96.5%
Native women	75.3%
All women	82.2%





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# Chapter 1

## A Comparison of Native Cultures and the OPS Organizational Cultures

The Conference explored the nature of the OPS and Native cultures through a variety of experiences, presentations, role plays and discussions. The discussion leaders, facilitators and participants offered the following observations and cultural comparisons:

- There are many Native cultures. Therefore it is difficult to make generalizations about all Native Peoples based on a single culture. Similarly, there are many organizational cultures in the OPS and it is equally difficult to make generalizations about the cultures of the OPS;
- An increasing number of Native Peoples are exploring and rediscovering their traditional cultures. This makes it difficult for Native Peoples to answer all their own questions about Native cultures, let alone answering questions regarding their cultures from non-Natives;
- The organizational cultures of the OPS, although not always readily apparent, are undergoing constant change such as:
  - the introduction of new management theories and practices;
  - the implementation of shared accountability framework's Accelerated Employment Equity Program;
  - changes in OPS demographic characteristics.

- Participants talking about the organizational culture of the OPS consistently mentioned that white, able-bodied males still dominate Senior Management positions. As such, their values and culture have had an ethnocentric impact on OPS employment systems, i.e. selection, training, hiring.

Given these qualifications, the following comparisons were made by participants to illustrate some of the major similarities and differences between Native cultures and the organizational cultures of the OPS.

## Non-Interference

Native Peoples have a way of influencing decisions without overtly meddling. Individuals are allowed to do things their own way as long as it does not interfere with the larger society. This stems from a belief that people proceed on a path which the Creator has set for them. Should an individual diverge from this path, the natural order of things is disrupted. It is the responsibility of the community to put the situation right.

Traditionally, when such a situation arises within a Native community, the individual(s) involved will initiate a request for intervention, usually from an Elder (there is no "interfering" per se). When the request is received, the Elder will approach the individual(s) concerned with the intention of reconciling the problem. More serious matters often require more than just an Elder trying to rectify the situation. In such cases, the Chief may become involved. A request for intervention comes from the family of Clan Mother - i.e., the community where the problem exists - and the Chief administers the required amount of influence in order to rectify the situation.

The community respects the individual without superseding the collective. That respect is lost when the good of one outweighs the good of many. People are expected to obey the laws of the Nation. When there are obvious infractions, the people deal with the results.



In contrast, it was felt that part of the OPS's day-to-day management and operation consists of constant advising, instructing, arguing and persuading.



## Concept of Time

Native Peoples' concept of time, which they have always respected and worked with, has derived from what they perceive as the natural order of the world. Time is based on seasons, on moon cycles, on sunrise and sunset, etc . Long-term planning ensures tasks will be completed during the life cycles as they evolve. In today's society, this carry-over of a cultural perception of time is not recognized as a positive aspect. Consequently, Native Peoples' more long-term philosophy of time is often interpreted as being a lax or uncaring trait of their culture.

In the OPS culture, time is seen as a rigid, structured element. Working against time appears to be the norm. Tardiness is frowned upon. Timely provision of goods and services is a key customer service expectation of the public. Deadlines must be met. Short-term planning is more often the rule, rather than the exception.

## Sharing

In most Native cultures, sharing the material goods, knowledge and experience of the individuals, families and the community is valued. No one is supposed to take more from the environment than one needs to survive.

In contrast, the OPS promotes competition, ownership and individual success through individual competitions, individual rewards, etc. This individualism is constantly stressed by such questions as, "Will you compete for the job?" or "Did you win the competition?" This individualism is foreign and intimidating to most Native Peoples. It reinforces their sense of alienation, isolation and dislocation within the OPS. For Native public servants, success in this competitive environment usually means a permanent relocation and, therefore, a loss to their Native community.

## Equality and Respect

In Native cultures, everyone is equal and, with the exception of Elders, no one is given special treatment. Each individual is accorded natural respect as a human being. The use of a circle for discussion is probably



the most visible symbol of this equality.

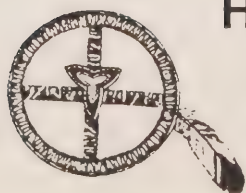
In the OPS cultures, the division of labour, hierarchical command and control structures, stratified pay and benefits system, etc., create and maintain a system of superiors and subordinates. Although the OPS has experimented, and is experimenting, with new structures and decision-making processes based on greater equality for all employees, the OPS cultures do not have the same degree of respect for the individual. This difference often leaves Native public servants with an unfamiliar and unsettling sense of lack of power and lack of involvement in the decision-making processes. It alienates the Native public servant and makes the OPS seem harsh, unfeeling and insensitive. In many instances, the Native public servant is reluctant to offer an opinion lest it be treated harshly. Many Native Peoples find it extremely difficult to work in such an environment.

## Gratitude

In traditional Native cultures, each person is expected to take his/her share of the responsibility and to do it well. Doing the best one can do is a reward in and of itself. However, if one makes a contribution over and above what is required, then that person may be honoured. This honouring takes the form of the public giving of a symbolic item, such as a traditional gift. Such an honouring serves two purposes. It shows the individual that the community recognizes his/her contribution and provides community members with an example to which they can aspire.

In the OPS, expression of gratitude for a job well done is a function of the management style of each superior. The "human relations school of management" encourages employees to strive to become a better employee, usually for the purposes of advancement. The challenge is to honour contributions over and above what is required without encouraging individualism.

## Humour



In Native cultures, humour is an important element, especially when dealing with a contentious issue. Oftentimes, the more contentious the issue, the more humour will be needed to release some of the tension surrounding the situation.

In the OPS, the use of humour is not generally included in decision-making processes. Using humour could be perceived as lessening the seriousness of the situation. Native public servants see the OPS as cold, impersonable and humourless which, in turn, makes Native employees feel uncomfortable and alienated.

## Trust

In Native cultures, establishing trust is the first step in developing a relationship, often called the “tobacco” level. The building of trust is a necessary and lengthy process. It precedes talking about problems or asking for favours.

It is felt that, in the OPS, people interact only to conduct business. They interact based on their positioning in the bureaucracy. Trust is seldom sought or given. The focus of work is on the task at hand and not on the people doing the job.

## Power

In traditional Native cultures, power resides with the people. A leader earns this position and maintains it only as long as (s)he demonstrates commitment to the people. Leadership is therefore not contained in the title, but is contained in the way leadership qualities are lived and displayed.

In the OPS, power resides at the top of the hierarchy. It is delegated, in varying degrees, to lower levels across the bureaucracy. The OPS consists of a system of command and control, with superiors in control and subordinates at their command. Superiors may be elected, hired or promoted based on a combination of experience, credentials and/or politics.

## Work Ethic

Native cultures place strong emphasis on family and community relationships, including the cultural activities which surround these factors. These activities, or special ceremonies, which Native Peoples must attend, are not recognized by the OPS as legitimate reasons for leave or for being absent from work.

It was felt that, in the OPS, most public servants are expected to put their job first, over and above all other aspects of one's life, especially family. In order to be valued by the OPS, public servants must be career-minded. They must continually demonstrate this by not letting the family aspects of their life interfere with or intrude on work. Although this is a source of concern for many non-Native public servants, it is an even greater concern for Native public servants.

## Holistic Approaches

Native cultures use a holistic view which takes the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of an issue into consideration. Native public servants are reluctant to compartmentalize issues. Thus, they often appear unable to participate in, or offer significant contributions to, discussions in the workplace.

Although the OPS is increasingly viewing policy issues from a holistic and long-term perspective, it is felt that the OPS still deals with most issues from a short-term perspective and, for a variety of reasons, still compartmentalizes issues and options.

## Decision-Making Processes

In traditional Native cultures, decisions are made through consensus. Each person in the community is given an opportunity to speak, and is given all the time (s)he needs to make his/her point. When everyone is heard, community leaders restate the original issue and highlight the action(s) the community agreed upon. The "decision" reflects all the concerns and thoughts that the community has spoken and is a product of a truly democratic process.

In the OPS, most decisions are made in one of two ways. Some feel that senior management does all the real decision-making and then hands its orders down through the ranks for implementation. Others feel that decisions are made by committees using the adversarial mode. In this process, individuals present their position and attempt to gain support for it. The rest of the committee tries to pick holes in the proposal. The winning position is the one that receives the most votes by those present. This position is then taken to senior management for ratification. Execu-





tives may agree with the position, pass it back to the committee for further refinement, or reject it outright. Although there are exceptions to these models of decision-making in the OPS, consensus is still perceived as a seldom used process in the workplace.

## Leadership

In traditional Native cultures, leaders are typically selected by Clan mothers or Elders. Often the individual is observed from a very young age and is selected for his/her potential to lead the people. Elders and Clan mothers ensure this individual receives all the necessary training and teachings required to make him/her become an effective leader. At no time is leadership absolute. The people follow as long as the leader is faithful in representing their interests. If the leader acts in a way that displeases the community, (s)he is simply removed from the position. Therefore, the Native concept of leadership is dependent upon the implicit permission of the community.

It is felt that, in the OPS, notions of leadership revolve around power and authority to control the workforce. Leaders are usually appointed by the political/bureaucratic system. The workforce does not participate in this decision. Excessive hierarchy often makes leaders in the OPS inaccessible and unknown to their staff. Very few public servants ever have interaction with the most senior levels of government. An aura of mystique and “fear of top brass” are notions that exist widely in the OPS.

## Results Orientation

Native cultures expect everyone to do their best. Therefore, there is little need to “supervise” someone. Similar to the cultural concept of non-interference, supervising is seen as not being respectful of the Native individual.

The OPS is concerned with the delineation of goals, standards, and targets, and the impersonal measurement of such, to the exclusion of the context and recognition of non-quantifiable or intangibles inherent in many aspects of life. Value is placed on defining and completing the tasks, within a given period of time, and holding people accountable for this task. This often results in constant supervision that is intimidating

to a Native person. Mutual agreement between the two parties to establish annual goals, with quarterly reviews to determine progress, including adjustment for assistance, as needed, might result in a less threatening atmosphere and a more positive attitude for the Native individual concerned.

## Governance

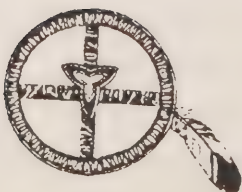
In Native cultures, the people govern and control their systems so that they serve the Native Peoples. If the community determines the need for some change, the people with the appropriate knowledge are given the responsibility to proceed with these changes. This will then be ratified by the community.

The OPS "system" has its roots in the colonial, church-dominated parliamentary democracy (dominant society). This "system" has provided benefits, by and large, to those few persons who sought control over this part of the continent. The participants use this "system" to justify the exploitation of resource materials (human and inert).

Native OPSers are not comfortable with a system that both Native and non-Native OPSers have described as resistant to beneficial change for all people, not just the white able-bodied male and female. For historical reasons, the Native community mistrusts government. Both Native and non-Native public servants feel that if they could get the "system" to be more sensitive to individual needs, many public servants and members of the public would benefit.

## Assimilation

Native Peoples have been resisting attempts to assimilate them into non-Native cultures since the first European settlers arrived in North America. They do not want to give up their culture in order to work for the OPS. Some Native public servants feel lost in a "twilight zone", somewhere between the two cultures, a zone in which they have little sense of self-esteem or self-worth. Some Native public servants even fear that employment equity may lead to assimilation.



The OPS, often inadvertently because of how it functions, or through a lack of sensitivity to Native cultures, expects Native public servants to abandon their culture and assimilate into the bureaucratic ways of doing business. This poses major problems for the OPS if it expects to successfully recruit and retain Native Peoples at a time when Native communities are pursuing self-government and a revitalization of their cultural ways and traditions.

In summary, the Conference participants felt that some public servants "can walk both trails successfully". However, one has to recognize that there is both positive and negative in all things - there is good in the wind, but also danger if the wind is too strong.





## Chapter 2

# Barrier Elimination Measures

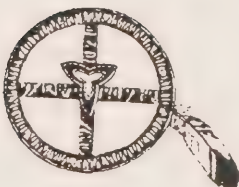
"The achievement of employment equity requires the removal of barriers which prevent full employment participation of Native Peoples. These barriers refer to those aspects of the OPS employment and work policies, practices and procedures which (inadvertently or intentionally) exclude Native Peoples for reasons which have nothing to do with their ability to effectively perform the job."

(Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat)

The following sections briefly describe the requirements of Management Board Secretariat for barrier elimination and present a number of proposals from the Conference on how these barriers can be eliminated for Native Peoples.

### 1. Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process is perhaps the most critical area, with respect to potential employment barriers, for Native Peoples. Recruitment and Selection includes not only initial hiring, through the competitive process, but also other selection mechanisms such as waivers, underfills and inventories.



## Selection Criteria

"Selection Criteria must be developed to ensure that the standards identified for the evaluation of candidates are reasonable and job-related. Selection criteria should accurately and realistically reflect the qualifications and abilities essential to carry out the job duties. Non-related job requirements, such as arbitrary standards of education or work experience, can systemically exclude designated group members... Positions requiring "credentials" should be identified when developing or revising the job description. Credentials must only be imposed when essential for job performance and when they are consistent with corporate policy: i.e. where required by statute or regulation, where the credential is the sole means of acquiring the skills, knowledge and ability necessary for the effective job performance." (Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat, pp. 3 -4)

## Conference Proposals

- **Valuing "Life" Experiences and Knowledge** - The difficulties many Native Peoples have experienced with the education system, job market, and selection criteria that stresses educational levels and previous employment histories, may have an adverse effect on their ability to meet these criteria. An alternative method is to find ways of defining selection criteria that "values" and considers the full range of life experiences Native Peoples have. Look at the knowledge they have learned in settings other than schools and workplaces, such as life skills which include both organizational skills and problem solving skills. These latter skills can easily be transferred and utilized in the workplace.

## Recruitment

"The purpose of the recruitment process is to attract qualified applicants. Typically, organizations follow recruitment procedures which have previously been successful. If few designated group members have been recruited in the past, it may be that there are barriers in the recruitment methods which have caused certain groups to be unaware of vacant positions or discouraged them from applying for these positions. The



entire recruitment process needs to be evaluated in order to identify actual or potential systemic barriers to employment access.”( Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat, pp. 5 -7)

## Conference Proposals

- **“Open” and Province-wide Areas of Search** - Although the statistics on the number of Native public servants are incomplete, 1992 estimates indicate there are approximately 1,099 Native employees in the OPS, which has a total employment of approximately 81,736. Given this low number of Native employees, 1.7% (OPS - Native Peoples Representation, Workforce Profile Data, May 1992), any area of search that is less than “open” and “province-wide” is likely to discriminate against Native Peoples. In order to increase the representation of Native Peoples in the OPS, then the area of search for qualified candidates should be both “open” and “province-wide”.
- **Outreach Directly to Native Communities** - National advertising, in such publications as the Globe and Mail, although available, may reach the general Native population in isolated areas only after lengthy delays. More use should be made of local daily and weekly newspapers, and Native newspapers. The length of time for a job competition should be doubled to recruit Native persons. This extension would allow people in isolated areas to see the advertisement and would give them time to decide to respond. This process can be supplemented with specific outreach recruitment activities in Native communities. In urban centres, this could be done through Native Friendship/Community Centres. In rural and remote areas, this could be done through direct visits to the Band office, for posting advertisements in strategic locations, as well as in the Band newsletter.



- **Outreach that Informs and is Appropriate for Native Peoples** - Such outreach should be more than just letting Native Peoples know about the job opportunity. It could include such things as:
  - using Native public servants as role models to give orientation workshops to potential applicants;
  - training potential Native applicants in how to prepare resumes and how to deal with interview boards;
  - developing (and then maintaining) a database of Native applicants, their skills, abilities, etc., that can be used to present job opportunities to them;
  - identifying employment equity target groups on the application forms;
  - recognizing that English is probably a second or third language for some Native Peoples and plain language is critical in effective communication;
  - respecting the Native concept of time and the importance given to ensuring that the “time is right”.
- **Use of Waivers** - Waivers can have the effect of including or excluding Native Peoples. This concern should be explored further with OPSEU so that an equal partnership between these two parties can be formed to pursue Employment Equity goals. The general rule should be that Native Peoples are appointed into positions (without competitions for Native designated jobs) in proportion to other designated group members and non-designated group members. Where waivers of competition result in excluding Native Peoples, the more they are used, the more it gives Native Peoples the impression that they are being discriminated against. The waivers should be set at the minimum entry level, rather than the maximum entry level.

## Screening

“Screening procedures, such as prescreening applications and administering tests, are critical to the equitable hiring of designated group members. It is at this stage, in particular, that emphasis on subjective and/or non-job-related criteria can have an adverse impact on designated group members.” (Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat, pp. 7 -9)

## Conference Proposals

- **Include a Native Person in any Screening Procedure -**

Given the potential risks that prescreening, or the administration of tests, may be culturally biased and result in the exclusion of Native Peoples, one could include a Native person, who has expertise in this field, in validating any such screening procedure.

- Conduct an indepth review of credentialism required for each position. Through a review of the job description and essential credentials to carry out the job, more Native applicants, who have the minimum educational requirements and whose skill levels and experiences are taken into account, may be considered as serious candidates for the position to be filled.
- Include, among those to be interviewed, Native candidates who meet the minimum educational requirements.

## Interviewing

The interview process is the first interactive opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their suitability for the job. The composition of the interview board, the nature of the interview questions, and the way in which interviews are assessed can impact negatively on members of designated groups.

Evaluating how candidates will “fit in”, for example, and whether or not their “style” is appropriate are often based on preconceptions about acceptable “styles” and the types of individuals currently performing





similar jobs. Assessing applicants in this manner frequently excludes people from other cultures who have different “styles” and who are not “carbon copies” of current or previous incumbents.

## **Conference Proposals**

### **Composition and Conduct of Interview Boards -**

Although many people are intimidated by interview situations, almost everything about interview boards and how they are conducted is alien to Native ways. The following proposals are offered in order to help reduce the potential for systemic discrimination:

- potential biases inherent in any interview process can be reduced by including one or more Native persons, if desired by the applicant, who are viewed as independent and objective, on the interview board or selection panels;
- be flexible regarding interview locations, and if practical, hold the interviews as close to the home of the Native candidate(s) as possible. It may also be beneficial to avoid conflicts between the date set for the interview and the interviewee’s obligations to family and/or community ceremonies and events;
- recognize the Native concepts of time, and allow the interview to go as long as the Native interviewee needs to answer the questions;
- recognize that English is probably a second or third language for many Native Peoples and that plain language is critical in effective communication;
- recognize that the Native ethic of non-interference may result in answers that seem to non-Natives to be unclear, rambling and not to the point (for example, if any response needs to be clarified, then one of the interviewers should make such a request);

- **provide interviewees with sufficient information about the Ministry and the job ahead of time;**
- **train managers, produce videos for managers and other people who participate in interview boards, so that they will recognize and understand Native cultural differences and the types of employment difficulties experienced by Native Peoples: e.g., eye contact, physical appearance, brief responses, silence, constant body movement, humour as an icebreaker and way of dealing with stressful situations, feelings (what causes them), need to use personal approach rather than abstract concepts, etc.;**
- **provide training to Native Peoples on how to prepare for interview boards, including interviewing skills, to enable them to compete successfully for positions;**
- **employ more Native Peoples in the role of Human Resource Consultants who would pay special attention to the interviewing and selection process;**
- **value “life” experiences and knowledge of Native Peoples;**
- **promote more qualified Native Peoples into management positions, thereby resulting in more interview boards directed by Native Peoples;**
- **give fair consideration to Native Peoples that can do the job as well or better than those who appear (on paper) to be able to do the job based on some set of qualifications; and**
- **instill in managers, and other people who participate on interview boards, that hiring Native Peoples addresses government priorities relating to Employment Equity and assists the OPS to become a role model for employers.**



## Orientation

"All employees need to be oriented to their work environment. The way in which new employees are introduced to the workplace often affects their ability to perform the job. A receptive host environment, clarity about job function and understanding about how the job integrates with the overall functioning of the ministry, region or branch will contribute positively to a new employee's work performance." ( Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat, pg. 11)

## Conference Proposals

**Increase the Understanding of Native Ways** - As mentioned earlier, most Native Peoples mistrust governments, are unfamiliar with the ways of government, and are often not convinced that they have done the right thing by coming to work within government. Sensitive orientation programs and practices could improve the retention rates of Native public servants. The following proposals are offered as some ways and means of improving the orientation process for new Native employees so that they do not feel quite so isolated and alienated:

- ministries could ensure the development and delivery of an orientation program to all new Native staff that includes detailed information on the Accelerated Employment Equity Program and what the new Native employee should do or whom they can call if they run into difficulties;
- develop orientation programs that help Native Peoples understand how the OPS functions, its values, expectations, etc. Increasing the Native person's understanding of the OPS can be as important as other initiatives designed to increase their non-Native colleagues' understanding of Native cultures;



- use experienced Native public servants to develop and deliver orientation programs for new Native employees;
- whenever possible, deliver job orientation and training programs at or close to the Native person's community. Where the numbers permit, it may be possible for several ministries to combine their efforts and conduct joint orientation programs for groups of new Native employees. This would help reduce the Native person's anxiety;
- conduct orientation sessions for new Native employees in the form and spirit of the "Circle", and where appropriate, the Native leader of the sessions could include traditional customs associated with the Native way of meetings;
- introduce new Native employees to support systems (i.e. ONEEC of which they are automatically a member) of experienced Native public servants;
- create workplace support groups (i.e. small Circles of Native public servants) to assist new Native employees to "settle in";
- ensure that Native employees are free to participate in workplace support groups without harassment;
- offer training on Native employment equity issues and approaches for public servants who work with or will be working with new Native employees; and
- use experienced Native public servants to audit and evaluate orientation programs with the view to improve their sensitivity to Native Peoples.



## 2. Training and Development

"Admission to developmental training programs is frequently based on salary or occupation. Criteria such as these, while appearing to be neutral, may in fact exclude members of designated groups who are under represented in those upper salary and occupational levels which attract training resources. Since training is critical to the career progression and mobility of employees, unless designated group members are able to participate in training programs, they will continue to be under represented in specific occupational groups." (Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat, pg. 12)

### Conference Proposals

Improve Training and Development Opportunities for Native Public Servants - Given the small number of Native public servants in the OPS (less than 2,000 i.e. less than 2% of the OPS), the provision of training and development opportunities is critical to improving their career progression and mobility. The following proposals are offered as some ways in which training and development opportunities can be improved for Native public servants:

- ensure that training dollars are spent on Native employees in proportion to the number of other designated and non-designated group members. In some instances it may be necessary to spend more per Native employee because of their low numbers in the OPS;
- wherever possible, provide on-the-job training. Like other cultures, Native Peoples tend to learn best by doing. Classroom learning has its place, but this type of education has not served Native Peoples very well in the past;
- ensure that all training provided is sensitive to Native cultures and Native Peoples;

- increase the number of Native trainers giving in-house training programs on supervisory skills, management skills, Employment Equity, etc. There is a very real need to develop role models for Native persons in the OPS. Increasing the number of Native trainers is an excellent starting point. A Training the Trainers program needs to be developed for, and with, Native public servants;
- increase the development and implementation of management training and development programs for Native public servants. This can include any combination of internships, apprenticeships, cross training, secondment, acting positions, mentoring, training on the job, specific academic training, etc. While it is desirable to have opportunities identified for Native public servants to participate in existing programs, there is an additional need to provide special assistance programs for Native public servants that work toward avoiding job ghettoization;
- increase the career planning assistance and succession training provided to Native public servants;
- establish a formal mentoring program for Native public servants with links to both a Native and non-Native mentor and coach;
- increase the use of "exchange programs" between government ministries, agencies and Native organizations (similar to existing exchange programs between Ontario government and businesses, Federal government, etc.). This could be especially important and valuable to both the OPS and Native communities in light of the Government's commitment to Native self-Government and the aspirations of Native Peoples in Ontario.





### 3. Promotion

"Most employees want to maximize their contribution to the organization. When promotional opportunities arise, employees want to be able to take advantage of such opportunities to meet their career development aspirations. Unfortunately, promotional opportunities are more limited for designated group members--in part because members of designated groups tend to be clustered in low-status occupational groups and because promotion criteria can often be vague, ambiguous and unknown. Your Ministry needs to break the cycle. One of the ways to do this is to develop a formal system which plans for training and promotional opportunities and which incorporates counselling on career development. Planning for promotion serves both the organization and employees and is an ideal way of expanding opportunities for members of designated groups who have previously been excluded from movement up the organizational hierarchy." (Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat)

#### Conference Proposals

##### **Break the Cycle of Low-Paying and Low-Status Jobs**

**for Native Public Servants** - One of the dilemmas for Native public servants is that competing for promotions requires a degree of assertiveness that is often inconsistent with their Native culture. Conversely, non-Native managers are sometimes frustrated by the lack of applications from Native Peoples and Native public servants for various positions or promotions. The following proposals are offered as some ways of addressing this dilemma:

- where appropriate, increase the use of "waivers of competition" to appoint a Native public servant where it is a promotion;
- make it a standard practice to ask or invite (in person) Native public servants to apply for various promotions. Do not rely on notices on the bulletin board or in Topical;

- increase the use of career path planning (and associated training and development initiatives) in order to increase their mobility into higher paying and higher status jobs;
- wherever possible, develop bona fide commitments to promote Native public servants based on their ability to do the job, not credentials.
- please also refer to earlier proposals offered under the Recruitment section of this chapter.

## 4. Working Conditions

"Good working conditions are conducive to establishing a good work or host environment. A good host environment allows employees to demonstrate their competencies and skills -- it allows employees to make their contribution to the organization and to meet their career aspirations. Even when they are adequately represented in the workplace, designated group members may be excluded from participating equally and fully in the key management process of the organization." (Including jobs and roles, decision making, planning and goal setting, communications, etc.) (Employment Systems Review: Technical Assistance Package - Management Board Secretariat)

### Conference Proposals

- **Break the Cycle of Streaming Native Peoples into Job Ghettos-** One of the problems encountered by some Native Peoples results from the stereotyping of Native Peoples as wanting to work outdoors or in the woods. This has lead to some ghettoization. The following proposals are offered as some ways of addressing this problem of ghettoization:

- resist stereotyping by talking directly to Native Peoples involved and finding out what their interests are.



- **Increase the Participation of Native Public Servants in the Decision-Making Processes of their Unit** - As mentioned earlier, the tendency of Native Peoples to be less assertive, may inadvertently leave them out of some of the internal planning and decision-making processes. The following proposals are offered as some ways of addressing this dilemma:

- increase efforts to invite Native employees to participate in these internal planning and decision-making processes;
- adapt the style of meetings to ensure that Native employees are given an opportunity to voice their opinion and the time to do so. Please bear in mind the difficulties some Native employees may have with participating in a typical OPS meeting that is driven by "arguing and defending positions".

- **Vary Working Conditions** - Working conditions, especially issues of leave and flexibility of work locations, can have significant impacts on Native employees. The following proposals are offered as some ways of addressing these issues;

- extend current policies regarding time off for religious observances, bereavement and leaves of absence to take into account the special needs of Native Peoples which may include extended families, travel time to remote locations and different religious observances;
- encourage managers to use the discretion inherent in these policies to accommodate these requests;
- recognize Native employees participation in Native political activity as equivalent to, and subject to, the same ground rules covering public



servants' participation in municipal, provincial or federal political activity;

- be flexible on where the job is carried out. Native Peoples may not want, or be able, to leave their home communities. With the development of technologies such as computers, modems, fax machines and electronic mail, it is increasingly possible to work at home.





# Chapter 3

## Supportive Measures

“Supportive measures are intended to remove barriers which have a greater impact on designated groups. Such measures also foster a work environment which is beneficial to all employees and generally improves the quality of the workplace.” (“Working Towards Equality - The Discussion Paper on Employment Equity Legislation”, Office of the Employment Equity Commissioner)

### Conference Proposals

#### • Flexible Working Arrangements and Organizational

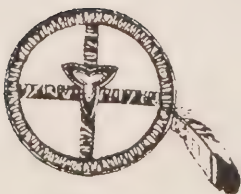
**Styles** -The low level of interest in the Native communities in working with the OPS is one of the most persistent problems. The following proposals are offered as some additional ways of addressing this:

- wherever practical, locate a Native employee's workplace(s) in their Native community;
- increase managers' knowledge of all policies and legislation that impact on Native Peoples provincially/federally ( i.e., the income tax exemption issue);
- develop support mechanisms for Native Peoples who have left their communities to work in the



OPS. The Circle concept of support can be delivered regionally and in conjunction with the Circle in Toronto;

- encourage managers and staff to put humanity back in the workplace;
  - foster a climate where change is encouraged, rewarded, sought and accepted;
  - clear the air, get work units to eliminate attitudes or stereotypes that both Native Peoples and the OPS have of each other;
  - promote the approach that sensitivity and respect generate a reciprocal environment. An excellent and happy workplace begins by being sensitive and respectful of people and their cultures;
  - where there is an interest, help non-Native public servants implement the Circle concept in their working place. This reinforces values such as listening, equality and consensus and helps make them a vital part of the working relationship;
  - promote the inherent value, economies, efficiencies and effectiveness of Native employees delivering services to Native clients and communities.
- **Clear/Concise Language** - Another set of problems involves the language difficulties experienced by some Native Peoples. English or French may be their second (or even third) language. The following are guidelines for addressing this problem:
- use clear/concise language in all forms of communication with Native Peoples;



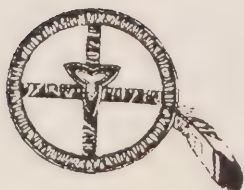
- increase non-Native public servants' awareness that English may be a second language for some Native Peoples;

-“say what you mean and mean what you say”.

• **Linkages with Native Communities** - Given that the central focus for Native Peoples is the community, the following proposals seek to develop new and innovative relationships between the OPS and the Native communities of Ontario:

- work with Native communities in addressing the high drop out rate for Native children and youth;
- create a supportive and positive image of the OPS as a potential future employer;
- invite representatives from Native communities across Ontario to attend an annual Native Employment Equity Conference similar to the one held in early 1992. This would multiply the opportunities for Native and non-Native people to meet and explore issues of common concern;
- rotate Native public servants back through their communities on a regular basis to serve as role models;
- develop partnerships with Native organizations and educational institutions to increase the immediate supply of Native recruits for a wide range of occupational groups and levels;
- establish a network of Native Peoples and OPS resource people who agree to exchange information and expertise through reciprocal workshops, training sessions, etc.;

- where appropriate, consider decentralization of some OPS jobs to Native communities. This is important so that fewer Native Peoples are separated from their communities by having to work in an urban setting. This will reduce the risk of Native Peoples losing touch with their cultures;
- advise Native Peoples of projects where the OPS has worked in a way that is mutually beneficial and consistent with both cultures.



# Chapter 4

## Implementation Measures

Implementation measures include the introduction of systems, programs and activities necessary to co-ordinate, assist, promote and monitor the effective and timely introduction of the preceding measures.

### **Recommendation #1**

- **Create an Advocacy Organization for Native Peoples in Ontario to foster the economic, social, and political equality of Ontario's Native Peoples.**

There is no advocacy organization in the OPS for Ontario's Native Peoples. All other Employment Equity designated groups are supported by such advocacy organizations (i.e., the Ontario Women's Directorate, the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat, the Office for Disability Issues and the Office of Francophone Affairs).

This "omission" alone speaks to the enormity of the systemic discrimination which Ontario's Native Peoples continue to face. The need for corrective action is clear.



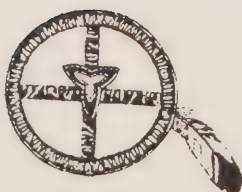
The proposed Advocacy Organization for Native Peoples will act as a:

- coordinator of provincial government policy on employment equity for Native Peoples;
- central policy adviser on Native issues within the Ontario Government;
- advisor to business, labour, government, community and other groups on the development and delivery of programs, services and resources to benefit Native Peoples;
- information source and educator of the public on Native issues.

This Advocacy Organization will work with Ministries and the public and private sectors to provide support and resources on the numerous issues related to Ontario's Native Peoples who presently fall between "jurisdictional cracks".

To carry out its function as **coordinator of OPS policy on employment equity for Native Peoples**, this Organization will:

- be given adequate resources and will be staffed by Native employees who are specialists in Native employment equity, pay equity, anti-racism and human rights issues;
- develop a comprehensive approach to outreach and recruitment of Native Peoples in the OPS by:
  - screening opportunities for Native Peoples at all levels of the OPS;
  - actively marketing candidates within the system;
  - developing policy on hiring practises (for example, encouraging ministries to advertise jobs in Native media,



in plain language and, where appropriate, in Native languages);

- promoting the inclusion of a Native person on selection panels, and so on.

- continue to assist ministries to develop orientation, personal support, job skills training, career counselling, internship, career planning, mentoring and succession planning programs that meet the special needs of Native Peoples and are conducive to the continued advancement of Native Peoples in the OPS;
- develop comprehensive programs to deal with the special barriers to employment equity faced by Native women and Native persons with disabilities;
- research, monitor and report on the results of Native employment equity initiatives within ministries and across the OPS and recommend changes to accelerate employment equity for Native Peoples;
- provide Native awareness, cross-cultural and anti-racism training to OPS managers and staff, as well as train-the-trainer programs for the ministries;
- create and maintain databases of:
  - qualified Native Peoples seeking employment with the OPS;
  - Native speakers and trainers willing to work with the OPS;
  - key information for the effective recruitment and retention of Native employees (i.e., First Nations Band Councils, Native Political, Cultural and Media Organizations and so on).

## Recommendation #2

**Create an effective education and communication strategy for the OPS focused on the critical need to accelerate employment equity for Ontario's Native Peoples.**

Education and communication are key components in any successful employment equity program. They are especially crucial to Native employment equity given the broad cross-cultural and organizational change initiatives needed to achieve its success. The proposed Native Advocacy Organization can help the OPS develop the cultural sensitivity needed to design effective education and communication programs to support Native employment equity.

Some other innovative ways to address this issue are:

- create a variety of cross-cultural work exchange programs between the staff of OPS organizational units and those of First Nations and Native communities and organizations;
- encourage cross-cultural teams in the OPS to explore new ways to apply both Native and OPS values in their work units;
- establish links between OPS trainers and traditional Native teachers to foster growth of "holistic" or "systemic" thinking. This kind of "new" thinking that the OPS needs to develop Learning Organizations is the intellectual basis of all traditional Native teachings.



### Recommendation #3

**Databases must be developed to identify the employment systems barriers in each ministry and to support and track progress in achieving employment equity for Ontario's Native Peoples.**

A thorough workforce analysis and data maintenance system is required to drive each ministry's required Employment Systems Review and to design each ministry's specific Employment Equity plans and programs. This will permit data analysis and managerial accountability to be linked to specific targets:

- set ministry-by-ministry goals and timetables for Native employment equity;
- set goals for Native employment equity in all occupational groups and all classification levels in the OPS;
- set specific goals for Native employees who are double or triple designated (e.g., Native women and disabled Native employees);
- clearly identify Native employees in contract and seasonal positions, and the duration of contracts, to reflect the reality of Native employment equity initiatives (today over 50% of Native OPS employees are contract or seasonal employees);
- make managers accountable to ensure that Native employment equity goals and timetables are achieved.

Improved data collection and analysis in the tracking of Native applicants seeking employment or promotion in selected occupations are also essential to Native employment equity. The proposed Native Advocacy Organization can provide vital support in this area.





## For Further Information

Please send me the following:

1. ONEEC Membership Information \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ additional copies of "The Challenge Paper"  
(list quantity desired)
3. Copy of the video "Honouring the Difference" \_\_\_\_\_  
(a 20 minute video presentation) on Native employment equity  
issues based on issues identified in this Report.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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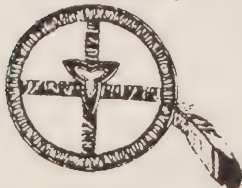
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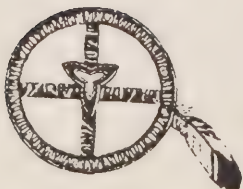
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